

Quarterly Magazine for the Alaska Department of Military & Veterans Affairs

WINTER 2007/2008

# WARRIORS



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**In Sight.** Private First Class Dustin Fast, Bravo Company, 297th Support Battalion gunner from Anchorage adjusts the focus on his night-sight before heading out on a security forces mission in Iraq. The unit deployed in late October in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Photo: Courtesy of Sergeant First Class Sterry Kimball, Bravo Company, 297th Support Battalion



### Security Scan.

Sergeant Michael Mathews, military police officer with the 49th Missile Defense Battalion, scans the perimeter of the Missile Defense

Complex at Fort Greely. Situated 30 miles north of the Alaska Mountain Range, the MDC is home to 16 emplaced ground-based interceptors that will intercept an incoming intercontinental ballistic missile threat launched by a rogue nation. The military police on Fort Greely are tasked to secure and defend the MDC and Missile Defense System from an array of threats. Photo: Sergeant Jack W. Carlson III, 49th Missile Defense Battalion

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# Dispatches from the Front...

## Operation Jump Start

Story and photo by Sergeant Benjamin Cossel, Operation Jump Start-Arizona Public Affairs

**AJO, Arizona ...** It's pretty much universally agreed that with the assistance of aviation assets from the National Guard, success of air operations for U.S. Customs and Border Protection has dramatically increased since the beginning of Operation Jump Start.

Unseen by the many who only observe the OH-58 Kiowas and UH-60 Black Hawks soaring through the sky is a divergent cast of supporting characters ranging from mechanics to crew chiefs, test pilots to refuelers.

It's a bright and early fall morning as Task Force Raven Warrant Officer Candidate Steven Ernst, of Anchorage, with E Company, 1/207th Aviation, Alaska Army National Guard, gathers his crew in preparation for a long day ahead.

Ernst and his team are petroleum, oil and lubrication specialists working the "daily" forward ammunition and refueling points.

Just as the team gets the first tank pump unit filled, a Kiowa crests a hilltop, coming down for a landing. Like clockwork, Ernst and his team don their protective equipment and standby.

"Kiowas are really fun and quick to refuel," said Ernst, noting that compared to the up-to-15 minutes it can take to refuel a Black Hawk, Kiowas refuel at only five to six minutes on average.

Testing fuel samples, refilling helicopters and the various other tasks that fill the days all add up to a rewarding experience that each of these Soldiers will take back to their home units.

"Working out here in Arizona for Operation Jump Start has been a phenomenal training experience," Ernst said. "Members from my unit in Alaska came down here before they deployed to Afghanistan, and they are constantly e-mailing me, telling me that the experience they gained here, in Arizona, has been a tremendous asset to them there."

Ernst said that not only does the day-to-day repetition of doing their job reinforce good habits, but with the wide breadth of experience all the Soldiers and Airmen bring to Task Force Raven, tips and tricks of the job are freely traded.

"There are so many guys here who have so much know-how doing this job," Ernst said. "And they pass on those years of knowledge to the younger troops, knowledge that would have taken them years to learn."

Refueled, the Kiowa takes back to the air to perform its mission of spotting undocumented aliens, protecting the southwestern border. Ernst takes a special joy in his mission, making sure aircraft of Task Force Raven have the fuel essential to their mission. ■

**On the Border.**  
Warrant Officer Candidate Steven Ernst, of the Alaska Army National Guard, checks the fuel-level status of a tank-pump unit at a Forward Ammunition and Refueling Point at the Ajo, Ariz., U.S. Customs and Border Protection Border Patrol station.



**Supporting Afghanistan's Future.** Alaska Army National Guard Major Wayne Hunt, of Delta Junction, assists the Afghan National Army Soldiers in handing out school supplies to children at an orphanage in Konduz, Afghanistan.

Photo: Lieutenant Colonel Anderson Rowan, U.S. Air Force

## Alaskans Across Afghanistan

By Major Wayne Hunt, Alaska Army National Guard

**MAZAR-E SHARIF, Afghanistan ...** Here's an update on what's been happening here in Afghanistan with your Alaska Army National Guardsmen.

Most of the team is at Camp Mike Spann in Mazar-e Sharif, working as Afghan National Police mentors. Three of us (Sergeant First Class Anibal Jorge, Sergeant First Class Robert Nunally and I) are out in Konduz. Nunally works as a police mentor, while Jorge and I are on the Logistics Support Team (formally the Embedded Transition Team) for the Afghan National Army Kandak (battalion).

Finally, Sergeant First Class Ramon Gutierrez and First Lieutenant Matt Paquin are out at Meymahneh working as police mentors. We all usually see each other when we go to Mazar-e Sharif for administrative or logistics reasons.

Our main focus is to train the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police to become self-sufficient. Their biggest challenge is learning to plan and execute logistics sustainment. They execute tactical operations well, so we are shifting our focus to assist in the logistics arena.

We are working alongside German trainers, and we also have Croatians, Norwegians and Swedes on the training/mentoring teams. It's a diverse and experienced group.

In our sector, criminal activities have accounted for most of the shootings, but recently there has been an increase in insurgent activities. While those activities are on the rise, so are larger and more coordinated Afghan National Security Forces operations to show the people of Afghanistan that their government is working to make their lives better and their future more secure.

In fact, on a recent operation in the north, we were able to defeat several important insurgent leaders during combat operations, and we are continuing to conduct presence and humanitarian aid operations to shore up local government and security forces. This operation has been a great success with no American or Coalition casualties during the initial combat phase.

So far, your Alaska Army National Guardsmen are enjoying safe and efficient missions and are marking the mid-point in the deployment with continued success. ■

# Where in the World

## Mongolians Visit the Last Frontier

By Major Stephen Wilson  
Alaska Army National Guard

**CAMP DENALI, Alaska ...** A contingent of Mongolian nationals, including President Nambaryn Enkhbayar and the first lady of Mongolia, traveled to Alaska this fall to get a first-hand look at how the Mongolia State Partnership Program is functioning in the Last Frontier.

"The state partnership program between Mongolia and the Alaska National Guard has been extremely successful," said Major General Craig E. Campbell, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard. "It's a pleasure to have the president of Mongolia here in Alaska to see the success of the program and the potential it has for future growth in the civilian sector. These exchanges help build on an already strong and thriving international partnership."

The delegation of more than 40 officials met with the leaders of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources; the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development; and the Permanent Fund Corporation. The Alaskans shared how they are able to balance revenue generation and environmental controls while still promoting natural resource development.

The Mongolian group also found it helpful to discuss and gather information on how Alaska does business with the mining industry. The Denali Commission explained the challenges of development in rural Alaska – a similar challenge in remote Mongolia. These information sharing sessions are just one piece to the ever expanding Alaska-Mongolia state

Mongolia



**A Strengthening Partnership.** President Nambaryn Enkhbayar, center, of Mongolia, met with Lieutenant Governor Sean Parnell, left, and Major General Craig E. Campbell, right, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard and commissioner of the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs, in October. Enkhbayar saw first-hand the growing state partnership between Alaska and Mongolia.

Photo: McHugh Pierre, DMVA Public Affairs

**Operation Maggie Migration.** Maggie, a 25-year-old African elephant, is gently loaded on an Alaska Air National Guard and Pacific Air Forces C-17 cargo aircraft moments before heading to her new home in California. Her size and the delicate nature of her transportation prompted zoo officials to enlist the help of the Alaska Air National Guard and Pacific Air Forces for the October transport. Photo: Captain Guy Hayes, DMVA Public Affairs

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**Welcome Home.** Members of the 144th Airlift Squadron from the 176th Wing at Kulis Air National Guard Base return home from a 30-day deployment to Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan. One hundred fifty-five Alaska National Guard Airmen have deployed to support airland and airdrop missions in support of Operation Enduring Freedom since September 2007. Photo: Captain Guy Hayes, DMVA Public Affairs



partnership program.

Enkhbayar witnessed the consummation of a sister-city relationship between Fairbanks and the mining town of Erdenet, Mongolia. Both towns share many geographical and environmental conditions. Following in the footsteps of the sister city relationship, Denali National Park and Altai Tavan Bogd National Park are now pursuing cooperative relationships in park management.

On the education front, the University of Alaska Fairbanks showcased its Center for Distance Education and

College of Engineering & Mines. In the future, the university hopes to welcome more students from Mongolia and treat them to a unique and worthwhile college experience.

Overall, Alaskans demonstrated the challenges they face living in a remote, rugged, and harsh environment and the extraordinary means they take to overcome those obstacles – conditions the Mongolians are very familiar with as well. It's a true testament to a partnership started out of similarities but continued because of friendship and success. ■



**New School Opens.** Colonel Mike Bridges, a member of an Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team, assists Ali Abid Abbas, the education committee chairman for the Taji Qada, in cutting the ribbon signifying the opening of the temporary school build in Al Awad, Iraq, for the local and surrounding-area children. The temporary trailers at the consolidated school ensure the children have a place to learn for the upcoming school year.

Photo: Specialist Shejal Pulivarti, 1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs



• Iraq Afghanistan  
• Kuwait



**Desert Range.** Soldiers from B Company, 297th Support Battalion, Alaska Army National Guard, hone their shooting skills on a range in Kuwait. The unit left Alaska in October and stopped in Kuwait before settling at Camp Anaconda for a 10-month deployment.

Photo: Courtesy of Alaska Army National Guard



**Serving in Latin America.** Alaska Air National Guard Staff Sergeant Natoya Harris, an intensive care unit medic attached to hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20), volunteers her time at the Jose Olaya School in Trujillo, Peru, by repainting earthquake muster points for children in the school courtyard. Comfort was on a four-month humanitarian deployment to Latin America and the Caribbean providing medical treatment to patients in a dozen countries

Photo: Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Tyler Jones, U.S. Navy

future through education,” said Colonel Mike Bridges, deputy team leader for Baghdad 5 Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team, addressing the school staff, Abbas and Sheikh Abid, the local sheik leader.

Upon cutting the ribbon, the local leaders provided Bridges with a brief tour of the school grounds during which they expressed their thanks.

“I appreciate all the help, and together we can help the people in the area,” Abid stated. He went on to share that the facility was momentarily sufficient but we still have work to do in order to accomplish improving the community.

“With the assemblage of local leaders working collectively, we will be able to make a permanent progression,” he stated.

In order to accommodate the amount of kids in need of schooling, there will be two separate shifts for the kids to attend school, said Bridges, of Anchorage and a member of the Alaska Army National Guard.

The 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, along with the Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team plans to work with local leaders to develop the temporary school by providing supplies and laying gravel in the courtyard. They also plan to work with Iraq’s Ministry of Education to build a permanent structure for the kids to receive an education.

“The community came together to facilitate the project in order to ensure the kids could go to school,” Bridges said. ■

## New School Opens in Iraq

By Specialist Shejal Pulivarti  
1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry  
Division Public Affairs

**CAMP TAJI, Iraq ...** The thick red ribbon was crisply sliced with a pair of scissors signifying the official opening of the school in Al Awad, Iraq, Oct. 29.

Ali Abid Abbas, the education committee chairman for Taji Qada, had the honor of cutting the ribbon establishing the temporary trailers as the consolidated school to ensure the surrounding

children have a school for the upcoming school year.

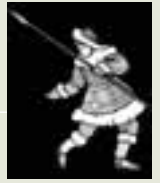
The 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, the Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team for the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division and local leadership have been working together since July to set up a school in Al Awad after Al Qaeda in Iraq destroyed four of the surrounding schools, resulting in approximately 700 students without a place to learn.

“The children are the future. Working together we can give your children a



# For the People

Governor Sarah Palin  
Commander in Chief



## Alaskans Rise to the Challenge



**Flag Returns from the Desert.** Governor Sarah Palin smiles after receiving an Alaska flag flown on a Humvee during a route security element patrol in Southern Iraq by the Alaska Army National Guard. The flag was presented to her by Lieutenant Colonel David Osborn, left, and Sergeant Major Alan Feaster, right, of 3rd Battalion, 297th Infantry. Palin visited the Guard members during their year-long deployment in July. Photo: Captain Guy Hayes, DMVA Public Affairs

Alaskans rise to the challenge of everyday life, and this department rises to the challenge in extraordinary ways. During times of natural disaster or state-wide emergency, you go to the aid of all Alaskans. When called to help the active-duty military in times of conflict at home or overseas, you help all Americans.

I'm honored to see firsthand and hear from others the impact Alaskans are making around the world. We have Soldiers building communities in Iraq

and teaching folks in Afghanistan how to be Soldiers who respect their neighbors and have the integrity to protect those who are in need. We have Airmen fighting the War on Drugs in Central America and we have Airmen in Afghanistan supporting the War on Terrorism.

I'm proud of our team leaders and mentors with the Alaska Military Youth Academy who make it their goal to help youth who are in need. We have hundreds of at-risk youth in our state. Some are homeless, some need guidance and some just need a positive adult influence. Semester after semester, leaders at the Alaska Military Youth Academy come forward to help teens better their lives. Not only is this making Alaska a better place, these efforts are building families and enhancing the decisions these teens will make as adults.

I'm thankful for the emergency responders, who continuously answer the urgent call to help those in the most

difficult conditions. These responders travel directly into the center of the storm to help communities begin the recovery process. In 2007, 380 rescues were conducted, saving 146 Alaskan lives. Always behind the scenes, these first responders are crucial to saving lives and to the successful reconstruction of damaged areas.

Veterans are receiving better care through your efforts as well. Surviving Alaska Territorial Guard members are receiving their discharge certificates at a faster pace than ever. This cooperation between local village tribal councils and the Office of Veterans Affairs is giving these elders the best possible service at the lowest cost. I'm proud to see DMVA meeting my vision of a leaner, more responsive government.

All Alaskans deserve quick and determined help from their government. We work for the people and you rise to the challenge every day meeting their needs. ■



**Aviation Day.** Governor Sarah Palin tests her flying abilities on one of the many flight simulators provided by the Medallion Foundation during Aviation Day at the Alaska National Guard Armory. Aviation Day was developed in 2007 to demonstrate some of the opportunities for aviation in Alaska. Students from STARBASE and cadets from the Alaska Military Youth Academy were able to learn about aviation from the lead organizations in aviation safety development, digital mapping and flight simulator development.

Photo: Captain Guy Hayes, DMVA Public Affairs

*I'm thankful for the  
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who continuously answer  
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those in the most difficult  
conditions.*





# My Turn

**Major General Craig E. Campbell**  
Adjutant General, Alaska National Guard  
& Commissioner, Alaska Department of Military & Veterans Affairs



## Recruiting Alaska's Best

Thank you to everyone in the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs. You all have made this past year one of the finest in our department's history. Service to our state and defense of our nation is a full-time commitment that takes the integration of people from all walks of life and from all cultures in our community – and you have done it exceptionally well.

Recruiting is our number one priority right now. We need to add to our team to continue serving our fellow Alaskans and to expand our capabilities. There are so many different areas of opportunity in our department to showcase your talents and help Alaskans in the most difficult of situations.

The Alaska Military Youth Academy always needs responsible adults who can mentor teens and provide a positive example for those who call out for help. Team leaders have the most important job at AMYA. These adults work with cadets seven days a week to mold their hearts and thoughts and build self-confidence. You can see a significant change in cadets' behavior and attitude after a short five months at the academy.

The Alaska Air National Guard has jobs that directly impact the civilian aviation network in both the urban and rural areas of the state. With the addition of the C-17 mission, the Air Guard is

expanding to the most sought-after airlift mission in the world. There are opportunities to work in the search and rescue field, aircraft maintenance arena, finance department and many other areas that translate directly into civilian job experience.

The Alaska Army National Guard has a new set of employment opportunities thanks to the reorganization into the Army's new battlefield surveillance brigade. This gives more Alaskans training as military police officers, medical technicians, engineers and other skill sets that directly impact many people living in rural Alaska.

The Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management has opportunities for Alaskans who are willing to go into the eye of the storm and help communities survive the most devastating disasters. DHS&EM doesn't just help communities weather storms, it helps private enterprises identify security risks and formulate continuity plans for foreseeable threats. These jobs take the most qualified and dedicated personnel, and we need Alaskans who are ready to rise to the challenge and make this state a better, safer place.

There are certainly other opportunities within the department, and I encourage Alaskans to consider being a part of something bigger than oneself. ■

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# Veterans

## Honoring Alaska's Veterans



**Respecting Veterans Service.** Jerry Beale, state veterans affairs administrator, and Major General Craig E. Campbell, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard, on a snowy Veterans Day, honor U.S., Canadian, Russian and English World War II veterans who are buried at the Fort Richardson National Cemetery.

Photo: Captain Guy Hayes, DMVA Public Affairs

By Jerry Beale, State Veterans Affairs Administrator

**CAMP DENALI, Alaska ...** At the eleventh hour, on the eleventh day, of the eleventh month, veterans, families, and friends gathered at the Alaska National Guard Armory to honor and remember those who have served.

Major General Craig E. Campbell, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard and commissioner of the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs, hosted the event, which featured guests from the Canadian Forces stationed at Elmendorf Air Force Base.

An array of speakers this year highlighted the importance of supporting U.S. troops overseas while emphasizing the need to pay tribute to those who have returned and served admirably.

During her keynote speech, U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski inspired all in attendance to both remember past warriors and continue to support military personnel deployed in the Global



**High Honors.** During the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs Veterans Day program, Lieutenant Governor Sean Parnell presents Maurice Bailey with the Governor's Veterans Advocacy Award. Bailey, a 20-year service veteran, was chosen for the award based on his active participation in veterans organizations and for starting the Veteran's Aviation Outreach program. Photo: Captain Guy Hayes, DMVA Public Affairs



*An array of speakers this year highlighted the importance of supporting U.S. troops overseas, while emphasizing the need to pay tribute to those who have returned and served admirably.*

War on Terrorism. Additionally, she reiterated the necessity and value of having such good allies as the Canadians and British.

Colonel Sylvain Bedard, commander of the Canadian Forces, spoke about the support his country has provided fighting in the Global War on Terrorism and explained some of the differences between American and Canadian forces. Following his tale, a Canadian performer who has visited the troops overseas played her guitar and sang a beautiful song for our troops overseas.

Governor Sarah Palin's proclamation was delivered by Lieutenant Governor Sean Parnell, while President George W. Bush's proclamation was read by Alex Spector, Veterans Affairs Anchorage Healthcare Clinic director.

A special highlight of the day honored an important supporter of veterans in Alaska. Maurice Bailey, of Wasilla, was presented with the highly coveted Governor's Veterans Advocacy Award.

Bailey is a retired Army veteran who served two tours in Vietnam. He retired from the Army at Fort Wainwright in 1976 after 20 years of service, but he continues to stay active with veterans groups. He is a member of the Disabled American Veterans and the Vietnam Veterans of America service organizations.

In 2005, Bailey founded Veterans Aviation Outreach Inc. to assist veterans in rural Alaska get to and from Anchorage for VA medical treatment and other benefits. The VAO program has grown to four pilots and continues to serve rural veterans with deliveries of supplies and equipment needed to improve their quality of life.

As a poignant ending to the day's event, the Vietnam Veterans Motorcycle Club conducted the Fallen Warrior Ceremony, and wreaths were placed to honor and remember some of America's finest. ■

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## Commanders Conference 2007: Mission and People

Story and photos by Captain Guy Hayes, DMVA Public Affairs

**CAMP DENALI, Alaska ...** Situated at the head of Resurrection Bay on the Kenai Peninsula is the historic and picturesque town of Seward. As a summer destination where many Alaskans enjoy outdoor adventures, wetting a line and spending time with family, it is often bustling. However, with the changing of summer into fall, Seward transitions back into a quiet little community – one which was the ideal place for the 2007 Alaska National Guard Commanders Conference.

The rustic, yet very cozy Seward Windsong Lodge was the perfect setting and opportunity for leaders from around the state to come together and discuss the best practices and a path forward for the Alaska National Guard. Highlighted by guest speakers, subject matter experts and “graybeards” from around the state and country, the conference was a time for Major General Craig E. Campbell, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard, to bring together all of his commanders to focus on continued improvements and success.

The directive was clear: mission and people. The Alaska National Guard has come a long way in a short period of time, and with continued strategic thinking, it will continue to evolve, grow and change into a better, brighter organization. However, it won't happen on its own.

Leaders are empowered to make decisions and must stand ready to take on new hurdles that come their way. Especially with so many Alaskans deploying and coming home from the War on Terrorism, we must ensure that we provide the resources and time to ease their transition at home.

In the end, the message for commanders is simple: never stop moving forward and work together to achieve the Alaska National Guard's goals. Whether you're in the Army Guard or Air Guard, it doesn't make a difference. Everyone is a part of one Alaska National Guard, and together anything can be accomplished. ■



**Seward Supports the Guard.** Brigadier General Thomas Katkus, commander of the Alaska Army National Guard, presents an American flag flown in Iraq to the Mayor of Seward Vanta Shafer. The flag was given in thanks for Seward's hospitality to the Alaska National Guard during the 2007 Commanders Conference.

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# Homeland Security & Emergency Management



## State Agencies Respond to Kivalina



**Storm Effects.** Claude Denver, an emergency management specialist with DHS&EM, assesses the area around the Kivalina sea wall.

Photo: Roy (Buzz) Bainbridge, DHS&EM

By Renee Nelson, Former DHS&EM Public Affairs

**CAMP DENALI, Alaska ...** An active fall sea storm season sent state emergency response representatives to

Kivalina to assess the imminent threat and damages caused by rough waves and high seas.

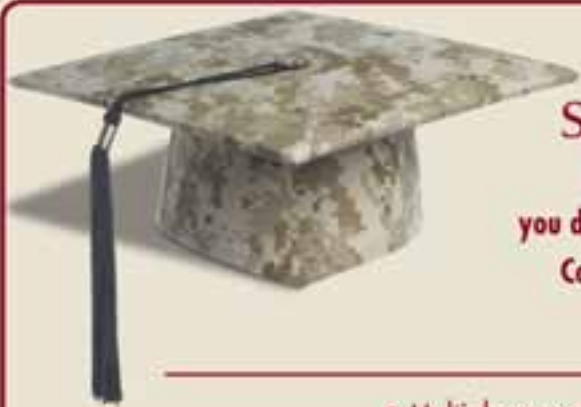
The Alaska Department of Military & Veterans Affairs Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management sent two representatives in September to coordinate with North West Arctic Borough officials in Kotzebue before traveling to Kivalina.

In a joint effort between the Northwest Arctic Borough and the village of Kivalina, about 230 Kivalina village residents voluntarily evacuated, with 132 people going to the Red Dog Mine and 98 going to Kotzebue. This evacuation was a precaution against expected erosion and high waves caused by the storm. All residents later returned to the village without incident.

"As history shows, threats to our coastal communities emerge throughout the fall sea storm season," said Major General Craig E. Campbell, commissioner of the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs. "As always, the state stands prepared to support borough officials and the citizens of Alaska at all times."

No damage was reported to the community buildings or infrastructure in Kivalina, but the State Emergency Coordination Center received a report that the sea wall was damaged.

A city with a population of about 450 people, Kivalina is located at the tip of an eight-mile barrier island separating the Chukchi Sea from the Kivalina River. It lies 80 air miles northwest of Kotzebue. ■



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# 168th Air Refueling Wing Serves Community During Deployment

Story and photos by First Lieutenant Malinda Singleton,  
478th Expeditionary Operations Squadron Public Affairs



**Destination: Ecuador.** Major General Craig E. Campbell, center, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard, stands with Lieutenant Colonel Robert Leonard, left, 478th Expeditionary Operations Squadron commander, and Lieutenant Colonel Mark Dewey, 168th Air Refueling Wing detachment commander, after he arrived at Forward Operating Location Manta, Ecuador. Campbell visited the Airmen from the Alaska Air National Guard deployed there.

**FORWARD OPERATING LOCATION MANTA, Ecuador ...** Major General Craig E. Campbell, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard, visited Alaska Air National Guard members deployed to Ecuador from the 168th Air Refueling Wing this winter.

The Alaska Airmen were supporting operations at the forward operating location in Manta for about 30 days as part of the 478th Expeditionary Operations Squadron.

During Campbell's visit, he traveled to Comedor De Divino Niños, which is a "soup kitchen" that feeds children in a local impoverished neighborhood. While there, he pledged \$405 towards the purchase of two doors and three windows, which the building currently does not have. He arrived on a KC-135, which also brought down bags of rice, beans and a box of school supplies that he donated to the kitchen.

The next stop on his visit was to Shekinah Orphanage, where he visited with the children and donated bags of rice and beans, boxes of clothes, shoes, stuffed animals, toiletries and toys. The children, in return, presented him with a poster showing their gratitude.

"Everywhere the Air National Guard goes, we are not just involved in our military duty, but also our civic duty by helping local communities," Campbell said. "Since we are from Alaska, where many of us have built our own homes, we have been able to bring these talents to Ecuador and help out the people in Manta."

Members of the 168th Air Refueling Wing spent much of their off-time out in the community working at Shekinah Orphanage, and also at Por Amor Orphanage located in a nearby village. At Por Amor Orphanage they built paths, as well as cleaned and repaired parts of the orphanage's future home. They were also able to spend time playing soccer and other games with the children.

"All of this ties into what we do in the Air National Guard – that is taking care of our local community," said Lieutenant Colonel Mark Dewey, 168th Air Refueling Wing detachment commander for the first half of the deployment. "We could not have done as much as we did on our short time here without the many members of our unit taking the time out to volunteer." ■



Few know about Manta located on Ecuador's western coast. Its location provides uninhibited strategic reconnaissance of more than 4,000 square miles of eastern Pacific Ocean, southern Caribbean Sea and Colombia. From the source to final destination, Department of Defense teams have dramatically impeded the otherwise free reign of South American drug trafficking.

U.S. Air National Guard refueling platforms provide critical aerial refueling support to these Department of Defense assets. The 168th Air Refueling Wing of the Alaska Air National Guard completed a 30-day rotation to Manta in which the unit completed more than 23 flawless sorties. In those sorties, the unit offloaded more than 1.5 million pounds of jet fuel.

"We came here wanting to set the standard for others to follow," said Lieutenant Colonel Robert Mackelprang, 168th Air Refueling Wing detachment commander for the second half of the deployment. "We are a critical member of this team and having an impact on the War on Drugs is what we're here for. It's a future impact that is far reaching, even to the frozen shores in Alaska."



**A Warm Thank You.** A child from the Shekinah Orphanage presents Major General Craig E. Campbell, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard, with a poster expressing the orphanage's gratitude for the donations that he, as well as the members from the 168th Air Refueling Wing, made during their time in Manta, Ecuador.



Alaska National Guard and Partners Celebrate  
Sharing and Caring for Village Children, Families

# OPERATION SANTA CLAUS 2007



## Winter Wonderland.

A young Togiak girl rushed to shake Santa's hand after he landed in Togiak for Operation Santa Claus.

Photo: Sergeant Karima Turner, DMVA Public Affairs



## Holiday Hug.

A Kotlik boy immediately hugs Santa after waiting in line to meet him during a recent Operation Santa Claus visit.

Photo: Kalei Brooks, DMVA Public Affairs



**"Tastee" Treats.** Three-year-old Kennedy Gosuk smiles at the camera after receiving an ice cream sundae during Operation Santa in Togiak. Rich Owens, owner of Tastee Freez in Alaska, donates hundreds of sundaes, which always prove to be a big hit in rural Alaska. Photo: Sergeant Karima Tuner, DMVA Public Affairs



**CAMP DENALI, Alaska** ... The holiday season rang throughout the Last Frontier with the sounds of laughter, jingle bells and, of course, the roar of the C-130 Hercules and the swooshing of the UH-60 Black Hawk rotors.

Operation Santa Claus celebrated its 51st year by visiting hundreds of children in 10 villages across Alaska. This annual event is part of the Alaska National Guard's community relations and support program that provides clothing, books, school supplies and toys for youngsters in communities across the state.

"Our goal is to bring the joy of the holiday season to children and families all across Alaska," said Major General Craig E. Campbell, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard. "We're excited to head this mission each year because it gives the Alaska National Guard an opportunity to reach out to several communities."

For children of rural Alaska, Santa's sleigh has come to resemble the Air National Guard's C-130 Hercules aircraft or the Army National Guard's UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter. Santa, Mrs. Claus and a team of elves spread the holiday spirit as soon as the aircraft land and cargo is unloaded.

This year, Santa and company spread the holiday cheer in Wainwright, Togiak, Kotlik, Barrow, Buckland, Manokotak, Saint Michael, Shishmaref, Kalskag and Alakanuk.

**HOW IT ALL BEGAN** ... The Alaska Air National Guard originally started Operation Santa Claus in 1956 as a result of a request from St. Mary's Mission for toys for their children.

Spring floods denied a fishing season that year, and the drought that followed eliminated the big game. Every bit of money the Mission had was used to pay for food to be shipped in, so it appeared there was no money to buy gifts for the children for Christmas that year.

So, Guardsmen accepted new or used toys in those days from members of the Anchorage community. In turn, they rehabbed used toys, then handed them over to Santa Claus for delivery aboard an Air Guard C-123J Provider.

Throughout the years, as time and social conditions in rural Alaska changed, other villages, schools and groups have invited Operation Santa Claus to their communities. Literally, tens of thousands of Alaska's children and adults have been on the receiving end of St. Nick's good cheer. ■



**Santa and Friends.** With Mrs. Claus and Lieutenant Governor Sean Parnell looking on, Hayden Ayojiak, eight-months old, looks at Santa Claus with curiosity in Togiak. Photo: Sergeant Karima Tuner, DMVA Public Affairs

#### **Santa's Kotlik Sleigh.**

Santa and Mrs. Claus get a lift to the Kotlik School in a sled pulled by a snowmachine.

Photo: Kalei Brooks, DMVA Public Affairs



# Family Support

## PARTNERS IN HELPING

By Kimberly Leary, Family Programs



**Caring for Soldiers.** These boxes of care packages were given out to Soldiers of B Company, 297th Support Battalion, Alaska Army National Guard, at their deployment ceremony. The care packages were put together and donated by the Curves staff in Wasilla. Photo: McHugh Pierre, DMVA Public Affairs

**CAMP DENALI, Alaska ...** The primary mission of Family Programs is resource and referral; for those service and family members who come to us for assistance, we provide the resources they need to solve the problem or refer them to the appropriate agency that can help.

Throughout the past few years, Family Programs has come to continuously rely on a few particular agencies to help Guardsmen and their families in times of need. While there are too many to mention here in entirety, we'd like to highlight a few of the local people and agencies that have truly gone above and beyond in their support of those who serve selflessly.

The Alaska Home Builders Care Endowment has generously set up a fund that provides \$1,000 grants to activated Guardsmen who have experienced a

verifiable hardship resulting in a financial difficulty. The grant is paid directly towards helping with rent or mortgage payments. This local organization tirelessly fundraises and has provided more than \$10,000 to Guardsmen who have experience house fires, unexpected medical issues and other dire hardships.

Operation Homefront ([www.operationhomefront.net](http://www.operationhomefront.net)) provides a wide variety of assistance from home/appliance repair and food donations to support groups and financial counseling/relief. While the local chapter of this agency, operated by super volunteer Charlotte Sandstede, recently closed, the national organization is still running at full speed and is able to offer assistance to those in need. Operation Homefront Alaska assisted Guardsmen in finding pet care, assisted with yard and home main-

tenance during deployments, supported families with food/clothing/gift donations, and assisted with financial needs by providing monetary grants and financial counseling.

Rich Owens has owned the local Tastee Freez since 1994, and he has supported the National Guard since then. He has personally raised money and donated time in supporting the numerous causes of the National Guard, from Operation Santa Claus to Family Days and other events celebrating those who serve in the Alaska National Guard. If a need arises during a deployment or a helping hand is needed, Family Programs can always count on Rich Owens!

Finally, individuals and agencies have shown their support to the National Guard by providing thousands of items for care packages and thousands of dollars in postage. From the individuals who have donated a box or two of postage-paid care packages for our deployed troops to the organizations such as Anchorage Board of Realtors, AMVETS, VFW and many others who have donated thousands of packages, nothing says, "We Support Our Troops," like a gift from home.

We truly have formed a partnership with these agencies and many others that are dedicated to helping Guardsmen and their families, and we depend on their support to complete our mission. Family Programs sincerely thanks all the agencies that have helped and continue to offer their support to those Guardsmen in need. Family Programs couldn't do it without them! As always, if you need assistance of any kind, help is just a toll-free phone call away: 1-888-917-3608. You can also call one of our local Family Assistance Center offices:

Anchorage . . . . .	428-6663
Bethel. . . . .	543-2759
Clear. . . . .	585-6225
Eielson . . . . .	377-8715
Fairbanks . . . . .	590-7201
Fort Greely . . . . .	873-2482
Juneau . . . . .	465-1351
Kulis . . . . .	249-1130
Nome . . . . .	443-6263



# Drill Sergeant Breaks New Ground

Story and photos by Sergeant Karima Turner, DMVA Public Affairs



**CAMP DENALI, Alaska ...** Known as the Last Frontier, it's not surprising at the kinds of people who are drawn to Alaska – adventurous, gregarious and trail-blazing to name a few.

It's also not surprising the kinds of Soldiers the Alaska Army National Guard enlists. They can easily be described as true Alaskans – the kinds of people you want fighting for your state and nation, the sort of people you are proud to call Arctic Warriors.

One Soldier in particular has taken hold of this spirit, becoming the first female drill sergeant in the Alaska Army National Guard.

Sergeant First Class Bonnie Cochran, a resident of Palmer, originally came from the Nebraska Army

National Guard before moving to Alaska in 2003 in the hopes of new job opportunities and experiences.

"This has definitely been a new experience for me," Cochran said. "I've always wanted to be a drill sergeant because to me a drill sergeant is the ultimate role model with ultimate responsibility. I've talked to people who've retired from the service, and they can still recall their drill sergeants' names. To have that great of an impact on someone is incredible."

Before Cochran could even begin to teach the new recruits how to be Soldiers, she had to go through a rigorous drill sergeant school herself, learning to be a teacher, mentor and motivator.

Sergeant First Class Gregory Ray, recruiting and retention marketing noncommissioned officer, said Soldiers like Cochran, who come back from drill sergeant school, know first-hand what young Soldiers are going to experience when they go to training.

Since returning in July from drill sergeant school in Fort Jackson, S.C., Cochran has joined the Recruiting and Retention Command as the Recruit Sustainment Program drill sergeant.

"Every state has a Recruit Sustainment Program," Cochran said. "One of the ways the National Guard Bureau has found to improve the program is to train and assign drill sergeants to RSP.

It helps to ensure that new Soldiers are at least somewhat prepared for what they will face at basic training."

At basic training, Soldiers are required to successfully complete certain tasks before they graduate, so before they go, Cochran focuses on teaching the recruits everything from drill and ceremony and rank structure to rappelling and basic medical tasks during RSP training.

"It's almost like pre-basic training," Cochran said.

"For example, they are going to have to rappel, and it's going to happen probably within that first week," Cochran said. "If they don't rappel, they don't graduate. So I'm kind of stacking the deck in their favor. I'm saying, 'Okay, we're going to go rappel, and I'm going to show you that you can do it.' So when they get down to basic training, hopefully they go off no problem, and they continue through and graduate; it helps them to take some of that self-doubt off their shoulders."

Cochran said that aside from teaching civilians to be Soldiers, it's important to her that she can be someone for her Soldiers to look up to.

"The greatest thing you can teach someone in the Army is how to be a Soldier," Cochran said. "It will affect their Soldier skills from there on out. I want to be a good role model" ■



**Pre-Basic Training.** New recruits for the Alaska Army National Guard begin their training in the Recruit Sustainment Program with Drill Sergeant Bonnie Cochran, who calls cadence to keep her new recruits in step.





# Missile Defense

## Alaska GMD Soldier Assists in Saving Life

By Captain Tim Brower, 49th Missile Defense Battalion

**FORT GREELY, Alaska ...** “Have stethoscope, will travel,” might be Staff Sergeant Eric Maschmeier’s new motto after his medical skills and handy equipment helped save a man’s life aboard an airplane.



**Life Saver.** Staff Sergeant Eric Maschmeier, a medical noncommissioned officer for the 49th Missile Defense Battalion (GMD), listens to a patient’s breathing while on duty at Fort Greely. He recently used the same stethoscope to assist in saving a man’s life aboard an airplane. Photo: Sergeant Jack W. Carlson III, 49th Missile Defense Battalion

Maschmeier, a medical noncommissioned officer assigned to the 49th Missile Defense Battalion (Ground-Based Midcourse Defense), was traveling onboard an Alaska Airlines flight from Fairbanks to Seattle this fall when, suddenly, one of the first-class passengers – a heavy set, middle-aged man – stood up from his seat.

He turned to his seatmate, told him that he was having difficulty breathing and moved into the aisle. He then clutched his chest and fell over, unconscious.

The flight attendant was unable to revive him and immediately put out a call on the aircraft intercom asking for any medical professionals to identify themselves. Maschmeier and a medical doctor, Marc Johnson, M.D., M.P.H., responded.

*“It was my first  
emergency experience  
at 35,000 feet.”*

– Staff Sergeant Eric Maschmeier

Over the course of the next 15 minutes, they worked to stabilize the unconscious passenger. Maschmeier opened his luggage and provided a stethoscope and blood pressure cuff. Although his experience with this type of incident was limited, he was calm, professional and swift.

“When it happens, it happens quickly, and all the training comes back to you,” Maschmeier commented.

While the doctor got on the radio with Mayo Clinic medical consultants, Maschmeier took serial blood pressures and monitored the patient’s pulse. These minute-by-minute information updates enabled the physician to make assessments of the patient’s condition. According to Johnson, the patient’s life was in Maschmeier’s hands.

Maschmeier interviewed passengers seated around the patient to determine his behavior in flight prior to the incident. He then conferred with the flight crew to determine if the patient had exhibited symptoms prior to boarding and deputized other first-class passengers to record vital signs and report additional symptoms as they occurred.

Maschmeier relayed this information to Johnson, all while attempting to rouse the unresponsive patient. Maschmeier’s calm, quiet, and low-key manner in managing an unconscious patient provided reassurance to the passengers and flight crew.

Ultimately, because the patient was unresponsive, sweating heavily and maintaining a low blood pressure, the aircraft diverted to Juneau. Paramedics revived the patient and transported him to an emergency room for evaluation and treatment.

Describing the event, Maschmeier says, “It was my first emergency experience at 35,000 feet.” ■





**Putting Soldiers and Families First.** Lieutenant General Kevin Campbell, commander of U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command, and the Fort Greely senior leaders sign the Army Family Covenant. Campbell is committed to ensuring that Soldiers and families who live at Fort Greely have quality amenities and facilities.

Photo: Sergeant Jack W. Carlson III, 49th Missile Defense Battalion

## Quality of Life a Top Priority

By Captain Tim Brower, 49th Missile Defense Battalion

**FORT GREELY, Alaska** ... Lieutenant General Kevin Campbell, commander of U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command/Army Forces Strategic Command, visited Fort Greely early this winter to sign the Army Family Covenant.

Prior to signing the covenant, Campbell met with Soldiers and families pledging to take care of those living at this remote location situated north of the Alaska Mountain Range. He pointed out that the missile defense mission at Fort Greely is an enduring mission that will remain longer than U.S. forces in Korea.

Campbell shared Secretary of the Army Pete Geren and Chief of Staff General George W. Casey's commitment to Army families with those gathered at the covenant signing ceremony. In his remarks, Campbell commented, "I am personally committed to ensuring that the Soldiers and families at Fort Greely live under the same standards for quality of life as I do in Huntsville."

Following the commanding general's remarks, Lieutenant Colonel Gregory McClinton, commander of U.S. Army Garrison-Fort Greely, described what major changes have occurred at Fort Greely since it was put in mothballs as part of Base Realignment and Closure in 1995. Highlights include a new post exchange, a renovated commissary and a post theater.

McClinton also described what Fort Greely residents can expect in the future. Funds have been programmed for items such as a community activity center and an indoor running track. He also said that Soldiers and families could expect a Subway Cart added to the AAFES Troop Store. ■

## The Army Family Covenant

*We* recognize the commitment and increasing sacrifices that our families are making every day.

*We* recognize the strength of our Soldiers comes from the strength of their families.

*We* are committed to providing Soldiers and families a quality of life that is commensurate with their service.

*We* are committed to providing our families a strong, supportive environment where they can thrive.

*We* are committed to building a partnership with Army families that enhances their strength and resilience.

*We* are committed to improving family readiness by:

- Standardizing and funding existing family programs and services
- Increasing accessibility and quality of healthcare
- Improving Soldier and family housing
- Ensuring excellence in schools, youth services and child care
- Expanding education and employment opportunities for family members



# MISSION COMPLETE: KUWAIT/IRAQ DEPLOYMENT A SUCCESS

By Kalei Brooks and McHugh Pierre, DMVA Public Affairs

## CAMP SHELBY, Mississippi ...

Alaska Army National Guardsmen serving in Kuwait for the past year with 3rd Battalion, 297th Infantry were officially welcomed home in October.

The approximately 575 Guard members served as security forces based in northern Kuwait since October 2006. Prior to leaving for Kuwait, the Alaskan Soldiers spent three months in training at Camp Shelby to prepare for the mission and conditions in the desert.

"I know first hand the conditions you faced while deployed, and I am extremely proud of the work you have accomplished," said Governor Sarah Palin. "Thank you for your commitment to Alaska and to America."

"Warriors, you have done what you were asked, and you served with success," said Major General Craig E. Campbell, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard. "You voluntarily faced

an enemy with no clear designation and have returned home victorious; you are the next greatest generation."

While deployed, the unit was tasked with the key mission of protecting convoys and providing security for Coalition Forces. Their mission kept them busy across three bases in northern Kuwait and along routes in southern Iraq.

"You have made your state and country proud," said U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski. "As you begin coming home ... not only will you make your family and your friends very

happy, you will bring home a tremendous honor of achievement to our state."

"I have the deepest respect for you," said U.S. Representative Don Young. "You volunteered, you did a great job, and you achieved success. Welcome home!"

The 3rd Battalion consolidated Guardsmen from more than 80 Alaska communities in July 2006. It was the largest Alaska National Guard mobilization since World War II.



**Congressional Congratulations.** U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski thanks Sargeant First Class Jeff Kowchee, 3rd Battalion, 297th Infantry for his service in Kuwait and welcomes him back to the United States.  
Photo: Kalei Brooks, DMVA Public Affairs

**Alaska's Finest.** The Soldiers of 3rd Battalion, 297th Infantry stand at attention during their welcome home ceremony at Camp Shelby, Miss. Photo: Kalei Brooks, DMVA Public Affairs





**Welcome Home.** U.S. Congressman Don Young laughs with Chaplain Kirk Thorsteinson, 3rd Battalion, 297th Infantry and welcomes him back to the United States after a successful deployment to Kuwait. Photo: Kalei Brooks, DMVA Public Affairs



**Home at Last.** Specialist Seth Aguchak, of Scammon Bay, receives a long awaited kiss after returning home to Alaska in October after a 15-month mobilization. Photo: Captain Guy Hayes, DMVA Public Affairs



**A Hero's Welcome.** Sergeant Paul Grimsley is greeted by his family and friends at the Kenai Airport after returning from a year-long deployment with the Alaska Army National Guard's 3rd Battalion, 297th Infantry in Kuwait. Photo: Specialist Margaret J. Moonin, 134th Public Affairs Detachment







# Education

## Access to Higher Education Streamlined

By Staff Sergeant Eric Hamilton, DMVA Public Affairs



**Exploring Educational Opportunities.** Specialist Brandee Eubanks and Sergeant Shana Harris, both human resource specialists for the Alaska Army National Guard, look at the educational opportunities available to Guard members at the Education Support Office. Interested Guard members can go to E-203 at the Alaska National Guard Armory to find the Education Support Office. Photo: Sergeant Karima Turner, DMVA Public Affairs

**CAMP DENALI, Alaska ...** A new memorandum of agreement is expected to greatly increase access to education for Alaska National Guardsmen. Major General Craig E. Campbell, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard, and University of Alaska President Mark Hamilton are expected to sign the memorandum in January 2008. This new agreement is expected to change how Guardsmen apply for education benefits at the University of Alaska, starting with the summer 2008 semester.

“Basically, we want every Guardsman to be able to go to a University of Alaska school, present a valid military ID, driver’s license and letter of eligibility to serve as payment for his or her education for that semester,” said First Lieutenant Les Poletzky, the Alaska National Guard’s Education Support officer.

The Memorandum of Agreement between the Alaska National Guard and the University of Alaska shifts responsibility for managing and financing the program from the Alaska National Guard’s Education Support Office to the University’s student financial aid offices, although the funding will still originate from the state of Alaska.

As a result of the change, Guardsmen and Naval Militia members deal directly with the UA system, making the process much more responsive to individual needs. The change also eliminates the ESO’s application deadlines, so students will only need to meet University of Alaska deadlines. With this change also come increased opportunities.

“There’s supposed to be no limit on how many credits a student can sign up for,” Poletzky said. Graduate students, however, will be reimbursed at the completion of their classes for a maximum of three semester hours per term.

What the new memorandum won’t change are the standards for payment. Students who fail to complete classes successfully will have to appeal to the UA system directly (as in the case of unexpected mobilization) or pay for those classes on their own.

Standards won’t change for the letter of eligibility either. To receive a letter of eligibility for the upcoming semester, Air Guard and Naval Militia members will have to see their training noncommissioned officers to certify they are in good standing. Army Guard members will continue to apply through [www.nationalguardbenefits.com](http://www.nationalguardbenefits.com).

By facilitating higher education for Guardsmen, Campbell and Hamilton have partnered to create a more qualified Alaskan workforce and better educated troops. ■





# Who We Are...

## What is the worst Christmas present you've ever received?

**Sergeant  
Tina Lua**

*Joint Forces Headquarters  
Medical Detachment*



"When I was in the sixth grade, my boyfriend stole his mother's jewelry and gave it to me...I had to give it back."

**Staff Sergeant  
Eric Hamilton**

*DMVA Public Affairs*



"There were nine of us in my family, and one year my parents got us a two-player game that we were all expected to share. I think it was something like the original pong."

**Jamie Abordonado**

*Employee Support of the  
Guard and Reserve*



"When I was 10, my 5-year-old sister got me a water squirting fly for Christmas."

**Major  
Roger LeBlanc**

*Alaska Air National Guard*



"Two years ago, I spent time and money driving through two states to pick up a Christmas present from my uncle. I thought he was adding me to his will — he gave me a feminine green keychain."

**Sergeant  
Martin Johnson**

*Joint Forces Headquarters  
Supply Sergeant*



"One year my grandma got me a blue and white sweater with red reindeer on it; I was around ten."



**Staunch Supporter.** Patrick Henry Award winner Rich Owens stands proudly with Major General Craig E. Campbell, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard, after receiving the prestigious accolade. Owens has been a long-time supporter of the Alaska National Guard and received the Patrick Henry Award for his extraordinary support.

Photo: First Lieutenant Amy B. Slinker, 134th Public Affairs Detachment

## Alaskan Receives Prestigious National Guard Association Award

By Captain Guy Hayes, DMVA Public Affairs

**CAMP DENALI, Alaska** ... A local Alaskan businessman and philanthropist is the recipient of a national award that recognizes his extraordinary and excellent support of the Alaska National Guard.

Major General Craig E. Campbell, the adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard and commissioner of the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs, presented the prestigious National Guard Association of the United States Patrick Henry Award to Rich Owens, owner of Tastee Freez and co-owner of H2Oasis Indoor Waterpark in Anchorage. Owens was recognized for his outstanding support of the Alaska National Guard, Operation Santa Claus and Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve.

"Rich is a true Alaskan who exemplifies selflessness and patriotism," Campbell said. "He's been a cornerstone of support for the Alaska National Guard over the past two decades and continuously gives countless hours, dollars and time to our troops. We're very proud to have him as a member of our team and are happy to see him recognized nationally for his outstanding support."

Created in 1989, the Patrick Henry Award is designed to provide recognition to local officials and civic leaders who, in a position of great responsibility, distinguished themselves with outstanding and exceptional service to the Armed Forces of the United States, the National Guard or the National Guard Association of the United States.

Only one individual is selected annually by a national board and only if the individual has provided exceptionally strong support for the National Guard to clearly merit this award. ■



*Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve*

## Supporting Service Members Returning to the Work Force



**Supporting Alaska's Troops.** Representatives from Providence Health System Alaska sign a "5-Star Statement of Support." From left: Al Parrish, Providence vice president/chief executive; Rich Owens, South Central committee chairman; Kanute Rarey, Providence Valdez Medical Center; Michael Machulsky, state chairman; Kathleen Kloster, Providence Seward Medical Center; Don Rush, Providence Kodiak Island Medical Center; Bruce Lamoureux, Providence Alaska Medical Center; and Karl Garber, Providence Health System Alaska. Photo: Jamie Abordonado, ESGR

*This is an excerpt from a statement by L. Gordon Sumner Jr., executive director for the National Committee for the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, before the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions of the U.S. Senate.*

Since the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, 639,000 Reserve component members have been mobilized. As National Guard and Reserve service men and women are returning from Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait and other locations overseas, it is a critical time for

employers of these service men and women to remain supportive of their transition back to their civilian jobs.

The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 protects the employment and reemployment rights of federal and non-federal employees who leave their employment to perform military service. The role of informing service members and employers about this law, and of enforcing it fall to several different government organizations.

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve is a Department of Defense organization that seeks to develop and promote a culture in which all American employers support and value the military service of their employees. We do this by recognizing outstanding support, increasing awareness of the law and resolving conflicts through informal mediation.

It is important to note that ESGR is not an enforcement agency, and we do not have statutory authority to offer formal legal advice or to participate in any formal investigative or litigation process.

Our part in the USERRA issue is to inform and educate our customers – service members and their civilian employers – regarding their rights and responsibilities under the USERRA statute.

We have more than 1,000 trained volunteer ombudsmen throughout the country and a national call center in Arlington, Va., to provide those services.

ESGR operates proactive outreach programs to inform, educate and recognize the employers of our service members. We do this to raise awareness of USERRA and thank employers for their support.

ESGR works with appropriate government organizations such as the Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service, the Small Business Administration, and industry associations such as the Chamber of Commerce to create broad-based, nationwide support for our troops. ■

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call 907-330-8437 or 800-459-2921 (from outside Anchorage).





# Awards • Decorations • Promotions

## Meritorious Service Medal



MSgt Christopher S. Nolan .....168th ARW  
 MSgt Gerald A. Boynton .....168th MXS  
 TSgt Thomas W. Blair .....168th MXS  
 TSgt Charles A. Mitchell III .....213th SWS  
 Lt Col Todd M. Mackinaw .....168th ARS  
 Lt Col Dean A. Armstrong .....168th ARS  
 CMSgt Kenneth E. Latham .....168th LRS  
 CMSgt David O. Engen .....168th MXS  
 SMSgt Robbin L. Foran .....168th ARW  
 SMSgt Shannon L. Stalder .....168th LRS  
 MSgt Kenneth A. Cook .....168th MXS  
 MSgt Rodney J. Harker .....168th AMXS  
 Maj Steven J. Bucholz .....213th SWS  
 SMSgt Donald E. Brewer .....168th AMXS  
 SFC Kendre A. Jones .....JFHQ-AK (Army)  
 SSG Howard C. Peterson .....2nd Bn  
 SSG John C. Smyre .....JFHQ-AK (Army)  
 1LT William J. Yeo .....103rd CST  
 SGT Teddy I. Charles .....2nd Bn  
 LTC Dennis J. Eby .....JFHQ-AK (Army)  
 MSG Vincent T. Farris .....JFHQ-AK (Army)  
 SFC Jody A. Heffele .....207th Bde  
 CW3 Linda L. Oliver .....297th Spt Bn  
 CPT Gary P. Rowe .....1st Bn  
 SFC Elizabeth A. Sanvig .....207th Bde  
 SGM Jeffery F. Coker .....JFHQ-AK (Army)  
 SFC Daniel E. Coyne .....297th Spt Bn  
 Col Charles E. Foster .....176th WG  
 Maj Scot A. Milani .....211th RS  
 Maj Keolani W. Bailey .....176th ACS  
 CMSgt Gregory M. Lee .....176th AMXS  
 SMSgt George G. Gunn .....176th LRS  
 SMSgt Loukia S. Camak-Laursen .....176th OSF  
 SMSgt Darlene Anderson .....176th LRS  
 MSgt Bethany D. Miller .....176th MSF  
 MSgt Crystal L. Garris .....176th MSF  
 MSgt Ronald F. Ingreso .....176th WG  
 MSgt Glenn T. Sumabat .....176th LRS  
 MSgt Kimberly J. Stoltz .....206th CCS  
 MSgt Jeanette D. Gonzalez .....176th ACS  
 MSgt Robert W. Carte .....210th RS  
 MSgt Roy L. Duckworth .....176th MXS  
 TSgt Willie J. Hardee II .....176th MSG

## Army Commendation Medal



CPT Dale N. Titus .....49th MDB  
 MAJ John J. Brady .....Med Det  
 CPT Rochelle L. Davis .....Med Det  
 PFC Eric M. Fortner .....Med Det  
 LTC Clinton H. Foster .....Med Det

LTC Douglas L. Harvey .....Med Det  
 SGT Michael L. Manson .....3rd Bn  
 CPT Stacy R. Moody .....Med Det  
 SGT Elizabeth M. Robinson .....JFHQ-AK (Army)  
 CPT April L. Sapp .....Med Det  
 CPT Rebecca A. Young .....Med Det

## Air Force Commendation Medal



TSgt Nina L. Tomlinson .....168th ARW  
 Capt Edward F. Borneo .....168th ARW  
 TSgt Kelly K. Shewfelt .....168th MSF  
 TSgt Heather G. David-Damm .....168th MSF  
 TSgt Tracy P. Kurzenberger .....168th LRS  
 SSgt Tyler J. Toth .....168th MSF  
 SSgt Charlette A. Price .....168th MDG  
 MSgt James P. Rankin .....168th LRS  
 MSgt Javier R. Hinojosa .....168th MXS  
 MSgt Todd L. Redinius .....168th MXS  
 TSgt Angel R. Gurtler .....176th LRS  
 TSgt Earl J. Singleton .....176th LRS  
 SSgt Michael R. Reyor .....176th ACS  
 SSgt Kenneth O. Garris .....144th AS  
 SSgt Robert E. Meacham .....176th MXS  
 SSgt Christopher S. Cordiner .....176th ACS  
 SSgt Julie A. Arthur .....176th MOF

## Army Achievement Medal



SPC Rachel A. Gwizdak .....207th Bde  
 CPT Michael T. Long .....49th MDB  
 SSG Maritza J. Pearl .....Med Det

## Air Force Achievement Medal



TSgt Michael J. Travis .....168th LRS  
 SSgt Jackie L. Young .....168th MSF  
 Capt Mathew M. McClurg .....168th AMXS  
 MSgt Michael D. Church .....168th MXS  
 MSgt Robert E. Stavang .....168th MXS  
 MSgt John R. Miller .....168th OG  
 TSgt John R. Duhaime .....168th ARS  
 Capt Christopher E. Prince .....144th AS  
 CMSgt Gregory M. Lee .....176th AMXS  
 SMSgt Kristine M. Joyce .....176th MSF  
 MSgt Fortunato V. Galvez .....176th CES  
 MSgt Claudia P. Walton .....176th MSF  
 MSgt Angela L. Hunter .....176th MSF  
 MSgt Tracy L. Glaze .....176th MSF  
 MSgt Linda D. Flegle .....JFHQ-AK (Air)  
 MSgt Tamara A. Thunander .....JFHQ-AK (Air)  
 MSgt Lyn M. Garrett .....176th MSF  
 MSgt Amber O'Neal .....176th MSF  
 MSgt Shawn N. Gannon .....144th AS  
 MSgt Leigh A. Norman .....176th MOF  
 TSgt Ray L. Albeza .....176th MSF  
 TSgt Jerry L. Yow .....176th MSF  
 TSgt Robert L. Anderson Jr. ....176th CES  
 TSgt George M. Foley .....176th MXS  
 TSgt Carl S. Kancir .....176th MXS  
 SSgt Robert N. Holmes .....176th MXS  
 SSgt Saroya J. Warren .....176th MSF  
 SSgt Scott J. Ruta .....176th MXS  
 SSgt Jeremy R. Diermyer .....176th MXS  
 SrA Travis R. Robotkay .....144th AS

(continued on page 26)



**Trailblazer.** Staff Sergeant Chris Adams, center, gets his new stripes tacked on by his brother Staff Sergeant Jay Adams, left, and Major Carl Alvarez, right, all of the Alaska Air National Guard's 168th Air Refueling Wing. The promotion took place at the 367th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron Guard mount just prior to shift in Kyrgyzstan. This is the first ever "mobilized to war zone" promotion for the 168th Air Refueling Wing.

Photo: Chief Alan Carvajal, Security Forces Squadron manager

## AWARDS (continued)

### Army Good Conduct Medal



SSG Johnny J. Auman ..... 1st Bn  
 SSG Shawn O. Phillips ..... JFHQ-AK  
 SGT Robert S. Brown ..... 49th MDB  
 SGT Jack W. Carlson ..... 49th MDB  
 SGM Jeffery F. Coker ..... 49th MDB  
 SGT Anthony J. Craidon ..... 49th MDB  
 SGT Michael D. Dean ..... 49th MDB  
 SFC Richard C. Debilzan ..... 49th MDB  
 SGT Henry W. Dehling ..... 49th MDB  
 SGT Lisa M. Druga ..... 49th MDB  
 SFC Samuel P. Etheridge ..... 49th MDB  
 SSG William A. Gallagher ..... 49th MDB  
 CPL David Z. Kamer ..... 49th MDB  
 SFC Paul D. Kerr ..... RRD  
 SFC Lauren R. Kostoff ..... 49th MDB  
 SGT Steven J. Mageau ..... 49th MDB  
 SGT Michael L. Manson ..... 49th MDB  
 SSG Jason Martin ..... 49th MDB  
 SSG Eric J. Maschmeier ..... 49th MDB  
 SFC Maureen D. Meehan ..... 49th MDB  
 SPC Deena R. Meyer ..... 49th MDB  
 SGT Jonathan D. Moore ..... 49th MDB  
 CPL Shane S. Moore ..... 49th MDB  
 SGT Clayton E. Mullins ..... 49th MDB  
 SSG Billy J. Musgrove ..... 49th MDB  
 SGT Duane W. Ostrowski ..... 49th MDB  
 SSG Jeanette M. Padgett ..... 49th MDB  
 SFC William D. Ray Sr. .... 49th MDB  
 SGT Donald R. Reeder ..... 49th MDB  
 SSG Fernando Sangco ..... 49th MDB  
 SFC Lonzell Scott ..... 49th MDB  
 SGT Mark J. Scott ..... 49th MDB  
 SGT Anthony G. Varela ..... 49th MDB

SGT Joshua L. Wheeler ..... 49th MDB  
 SSG Frederick L. Williams .. JFHQ-AK (Army)  
 SGT Jeremy L. Christensen ..... 49th MDB  
 SSG Russell D. Craig ..... 49th MDB  
 SPC Joseph A. Pentland ..... 49th MDB

### Alaska Legion of Merit



LTC Dennis J. Eby ..... JFHQ-AK (Army)  
 MSG Vincent T. Farris ..... JFHQ-AK (Army)  
 CW3 Linda L. Oliver ..... 297th Spt Bn  
 COL Judith M. Eller ..... Med Det

### Alaska Distinguished Service Medal



SSG Terry D. Anderson ..... 3rd Bn  
 CW2 Neil D. Gotschall ..... 207th Avn  
 SSG Howard C. Peterson ..... 2nd Bn  
 SGM Russell W. Port ..... JFHQ-AK (Army)

### Alaska Commendation Medal



PFC Elaina D. Amberger .. JFHQ-AK (Army)  
 SPC Craig A. Collins ..... JFHQ-AK (Army)  
 SSG Leslie A. Dirkes ..... 207th Bde  
 PFC Tami L. Grande ..... 207th Bde  
 SFC Rhame L. Grubbs ..... 49th MDB  
 SFC Jacob M. Jacobs ..... JFHQ-AK (Army)  
 CPT Michael T. Long ..... 49th MDB  
 SPC Paul H. Oliver ..... 207th Bde  
 SPC Anthony Rosario ..... 207th Avn  
 SGT Jessica M. Main ..... JFHQ-AK (Army)

## RETIREMENTS

TSgt Nina L. Tomlinson ..... 168th ARW  
 Capt Essex L. Richardson Jr. ... 168th ARW  
 MSgt Christopher S. Nolan .... 168th ARW  
 MSgt Kenneth A. Cook ..... 168th MXS  
 MSgt Eugene E. Hodges III .... 168th MXS  
 MSG Vincent T. Farris ..... JFHQ-AK (Army)  
 SFC Morris Carrillo ..... 3rd Bn  
 SFC Jordan N. Niemeth ..... RRD  
 SSG Terry D. Anderson ..... 3rd Bn  
 SSG Howard C. Peterson ..... 2nd Bn  
 MSG Vincent T. Farris ..... JFHQ-AK (Army)  
 MSG Manuel Lopez ..... 297th Spt Bn  
 SMSgt Keith M. McDonough .... 168th CF  
 Lt Col Dean A. Armstrong ..... 168th ARS  
 SMSgt Donald E. Brewer ..... 168th AMXS  
 CMSgt Gregory Lee ..... 176 AMXS  
 CMSgt Charles Sutton ..... 176th CES  
 SMSgt Darlene Anderson ..... 176th LRS  
 SMSgt Louika Camaklaursen ... 176th OSF  
 MSgt Keith M. Gregory ..... 144th AS  
 MSgt Karl Heidelberg ..... 176th ACS  
 TSgt Gary L. Franklin ..... 176th MXS  
 TSgt Frank J. Sinerius ..... 176th CEC  
 TSgt Julian Smith ..... 176th CES  
 TSgt John P. Williamson ..... 176th WG  
 SSgt Oliver Andrus Jr ..... 176th LRS



### New Alaska Air Guard

**Commander.** Brigadier General Deborah McManus, right, is congratulated by Colonel John Griffin, left, commander of the 168th Air Refueling Wing, after the change of command ceremony naming her as assistant adjutant general for the Alaska Air National Guard. McManus is now Alaska's first female assistant adjutant general.

Photo: Staff Sergeant Christopher Gyden, 168th Communication Flight



# PROMOTIONS

## Lieutenant Colonel

Joseph J. Streff .....JFHQ-AK (Army)  
Philip Mieczynski .....176th MOF  
Jay Fuller .....176th MDG  
Kevin Schnell .....176th OSF

## Major

Jeffery J. McElhane .....JFHQ-AK (Army)  
Dollie Waters .....JFHQ-AK (Army)  
Michele M. Worm .....Med Det

## First Lieutenant

Rebecca Altenburg .....144th AS  
Audra Kern .....176th MXS  
Jeremy Stephens .....210th RQS

## Second Lieutenant

Clarence Stevens III .....176th ACS  
Brian Nosich .....176th OSF  
Gary Weir .....144th AS

## Sergeant Major

Jeffery F. Coker .....49th MDB

## Chief Master Sergeant

Daniel Anderson .....176th MXG

## First Sergeant

William M. Land .....207th Avn  
William K. Schwenke .....3rd Bn  
Christopher R. Simmons .....2nd Bn

## Master Sergeant (E-8)

David C. Foli .....RTI  
Larry E. White Jr. ....207th Avn  
William D. Ray Sr. ....49th MDB

## Senior Master Sergeant

Timothy A. Gilbert .....168th AMXS  
Douglas D. Hubbart .....168th MXS

## Sergeant First Class

Gabriel Gonzales .....RTI  
George D. Mebane .....JFHQ-AK (Army)  
James R. Morris .....207th Avn  
Stephan A. Young .....49th MDB  
Kevin R. McGaha .....49th MDB

## Master Sergeant (E-7)

Timothy J. Berg .....168th MXS  
Anthony J. Kuntz .....168th MSG  
Kimberly H. Mortrud .....168th MXS  
Shannon W. Epps .....168th AMXS  
Glen Tillman .....144th AS  
Eugene Lazar .....176th ACS  
Kenneth Joyce .....176th AMXS  
Timothy Weisenbuerger .....176th AMXS  
Karl Morris .....176th CES  
Cheryl Stocks .....176th LRS  
James Brewer .....176th MXG

Jessica Alvarez .....176th MDG  
Thomas Gregory .....176th MDG  
Tiffany Gregory .....176th MDG  
Kristian Mauk .....JFHQ-AK (Air)

## Staff Sergeant (E-6)

Eric J. Maschmeier .....49th MDB  
Daniel A. Bell .....297th Spt Bn  
Jesse E. Budke .....297th Spt Bn  
James A. Corbin .....RRD  
Edward G. Jones .....297th Spt Bn  
Michael T. Williams .....297th Spt Bn  
Melissa A. Zaronos .....49th MDB  
Albert W. Burns .....3rd Bn  
Troy J. Johnson .....207th Avn

## Technical Sergeant

David J. St. Laurent .....168th MXS  
Kyla M. Root .....168th MXS  
Clint J. Kerr .....168th AMXS  
Michael P. Burrell .....168th MXS  
Philip J. Nelson .....168th CF  
William P. Irvine Jr. ....168th MOF  
Tillman W. Stovall .....168th CF  
Lucas Hernandez .....168th OSF  
Shaun R. Loeffler .....168th AMXS  
Stephen C. Proctor .....168th AMXS  
Kevin Kelly .....144th AS  
Renaye Lavin .....144th AS  
George Kale II .....176th APF  
Jessica Lingo .....176th APF  
Heidi Gould .....176th APF  
Matthew Soukup .....176th APF  
Jay Schmidt .....176th ACS  
Jessica Pena .....176th ACS  
Zachary Darnell .....176th ACS  
Erik Nosich .....176th CES  
Michael Buck .....176th CES  
Michael Cooper .....176th LRS  
Benjamin Lund .....176th MXS  
Marcy Butler .....176th MXS  
William Bredin .....176th MXS  
Douglas Rotach .....176th MXS  
Jesse Swensgard .....176th MXS  
Marc Ocampo .....176th MDG  
Patrick Wakefield .....176th SFS  
Ryan Rabon .....176th SVF  
Jesus Rodriguez .....206th CCS  
Jared Friese .....206th CCS

## Sergeant

Samantha J. Dehling .....49th MDB  
Elizabeth M. Robinson .....JFHQ-AK (Army)  
Robert W. Bishop .....297th Spt Bn  
Cynthia L. Hatzis .....207th Bde  
Jonathan C. Lyle .....297th Spt Bn  
Ryan L. Madros .....297th Spt Bn  
Pichardo P. Minaya .....297th Spt Bn  
Matthew S. Nore .....297th Spt Bn  
Tyler Starkweather .....297th Spt Bn

Ashley T. Williams .....297th Spt Bn  
Kerribeth A. Clark .....207th Avn  
Shane S. Moore .....49th MDB  
Michael S. Olsen .....49th MDB  
Joseph L. Tenyck .....49th MDB  
Sasha S. Wenberg .....49th MDB

## Staff Sergeant

Paul Zagorski .....144th AS  
Leslie Diermyer .....144th AS  
Erik Kershner .....176th ACS  
Johnathan Damon .....176th ACS  
Stacey Rother .....176th ACS  
Jeremy Diermyer .....176th MXS  
Sheila Jones .....176th WG  
James Whitlock .....206th CCS  
John Swanson .....212th RQS  
Paul Zagorski .....144th AS  
Leslie Diermyer .....144th AS  
Erik Kershner .....176th ACS  
Johnathan Damon .....176th ACS  
Stacey Rother .....176th ACS  
Jeremy Diermyer .....176th MXS  
Sheila Jones .....176th WG  
James Whitlock .....206th CCS  
John Swanson .....212th RQS

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# Start of the Trail

Welcome our newest members & employees

## 176th Wing

Toni Morse  
Aaron Malone  
Amanda Akers  
Aaron Hunter  
Mitchell Singler  
Leslie Sieverkropp  
Edward Wilson  
Ladonna Dean  
Dustin Loughman  
Evan Johnston  
Allison Snow  
James Phelps  
Kathryn Baines  
Kim Matthews  
Elisabeth Phelps  
Eric Cox  
Eric Lovely  
Freddie Gann  
Michael O'Brien  
William Serra  
Morgan Wirum  
Christopher Gragg  
Scott Stewart  
Steven Nixon  
Chris Rishko  
Brett Brandemuhl  
Gregory Yoschak  
Brent Buss  
Benjamin Klien  
Sylvester Toole  
Curtis Hilty  
Chris Brunner  
Shannon Gragg  
Erin Soellers  
Figueroa Quinones  
James Saling  
John Carter  
Bret Beeler  
Bandon King  
Jesse Peterson  
Laura Grossman  
Mark Eaker  
Jeremy Akers  
Samuel Cooper  
Daniel Gese

## 168th Air Refueling Wing

Sara August  
Shawn Bergamaschi  
Joshua Konefal  
Michael Norwood  
Lonnie Young  
Charles Siegfried  
Christopher Williams

Kenneth Whitlock  
Cameron Donough  
Brian Tipton

## Joint Forces Headquarters (Army)

Joseph Lace

## 207th Infantry Brigade

Edward Eagerton  
Salvadore Sutton  
Sergey Trofimov  
Chandler Hummel  
Hector Senquiz  
Nikolaous Athanasiou  
Felicia Lawson  
Christopher Dailey  
Kenneth Sparks  
Carl Watson  
Justin Purvis  
Heather Roehl

## 207th Aviation Battalion

Terry Phillips-Tomlinson  
Jacob Johnson

Jake Idzerda  
Mikkel Andruss  
Timothy Lussier  
Raymond Ganacias  
Gerald Sheffield  
Jennifer Beaumier  
Matthew Heieren  
Natalie Jorgensen

## 297th Support Battalion

Vincent Ramos  
Joshua Guernsey  
Michael Burnash

## 297th Infantry

Gregorio Saludares  
William Oliva  
Joshua Corey  
Justin Sekerak  
Joe Pete

## Army Guard Medical Detachment

Rebekah Hirschel



**A Glimpse of Military Life.** Staff Sergeant Victor Ward and Staff Sergeant Nicholas Dutton rappel from a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter at Fort Richardson as a demonstration for the Recruit Sustainment Program. RSP is a program that allows recruits to learn military customs and courtesies prior to going to basic training.

Photo: First Lieutenant Amy B. Slinker, 134th Public Affairs Detachment

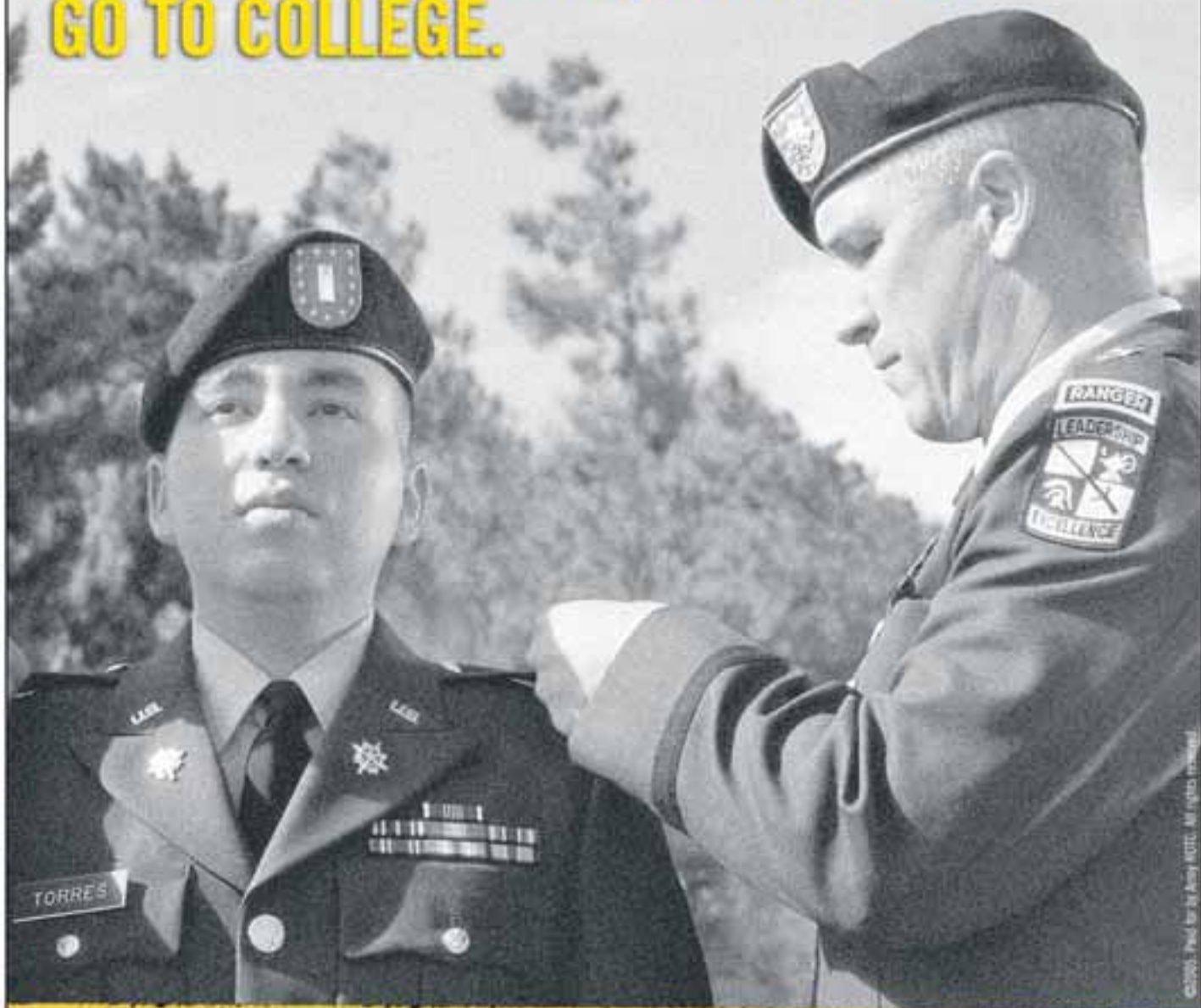
## Warriors Training Schedule

Here are the inactive training dates for all Alaska Army and Air National Guard units. Dates for subordinate units are the same as their parent headquarters, unless otherwise indicated. All dates are subject to change. Most Alaska Army Guard units perform annual training (AT) through the winter.

Alaska National Guard	Jan.	Feb.	March
Joint Forces Headquarters – Alaska (Air)	12-13	9-10	1-2
Joint Forces Headquarters – Alaska (Army)	11-14	9-10	22-23
<b>Alaska Army National Guard</b>			
207th Infantry Group	12-13	9-10	Feb. 29 – March 2
1/207th Aviation Regiment	10-13	8-10	1-2
297th Support Battalion	19-20	9-10	Feb. 29 – March 2
Regional Training Institute	12-13	9-10	1-2
<b>Alaska Air National Guard</b>			
168th Air Refueling Wing	12-13	9-10	8-9
176th Wing	12-13	9-10	1-2
<b>Alaska State Defense Force</b>			
Headquarters	19-20	16-17	15-16



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- Reduce the cost of recruiting new Soldiers
- Increase the number of new Soldiers recruited

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